

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 04959 01 OF 02 211957Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EURE-00 /079 W
-----212002Z 028165 /41

P R 211657Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6671
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
CINC USAFE RAMSTEIN
CINC USAREUR HEIDELBERG
CINC EUR VAIHINGEN
USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 04959

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 2)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, GW, PFOR
SUBJECT: STORMY SEAS AHEAD FOR THE BONN
GOVERNMENT

REFS: A. STUTTGART 466 DTG 181355Z MAR 77; NOTAL)
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PAGE 02 BONN 04959 01 OF 02 211957Z

B. BONN 4816 DTG 171747Z MAR 77; (NOTAL)
C. BONN 3793 DTG 021817Z MAR 77

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE SOCIAL/LIBERAL COALITION GOVERNMENT
HAS HAD MORE THAN ITS SHARE OF TROUBLES IN THE LAST FEW
DAYS: A BUGGING AFFAIR WHICH WILL NOT GO AWAY,
STUNNING CDU VICTORIES IN COMMUNAL ELECTIONS IN HESSE,

THE ELECTION OF A RADICAL AS NATIONAL JUSO CHAIRMAN, AND A VIOLENT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN DEMONSTRATORS AND POLICE AT A LOWER SAXONY NUCLEAR SITE. EVER SINCE TAKING OFFICE IN MID-DECEMBER, THE GOVERNMENT HAS STUMBLED FROM ONE GAFFE TO ANOTHER BUT HAS BEEN RESCUED BY THE OPPOSITION'S INABILITY TO PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE. HOWEVER, EVEN A WEAK OPPOSITION CAN NOT SAVE THE GOVERNMENT FROM ITS OWN INEPTITUDE. SCHMIDT AND GENSCHER WILL HAVE TO PUT THEIR OWN HOUSES IN ORDER AND PULL TOGETHER IF THE SOCIAL/LIBERAL COALITION IS TO WEATHER THE STORM. END SUMMARY.

1. WHEN CHANCELLOR HELMUT SCHMIDT LEFT LATE FRIDAY EVENING FOR HAMBURG, HE KNEW THAT HE HAD DIFFICULT DAYS AHEAD, BUT EVEN IN HIS MOST PESSIMISTIC MOMENTS HE COULD NOT HAVE ENVISIONED THE SERIES OF POLITICAL DISASTERS THE WEEKEND WOULD BRING.

2. ALREADY ON FRIDAY THE DISCLOSURE THAT THE AUTHORITIES IN BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG (STUTTGART 466) HAD ENGAGED IN THE ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE OF CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN DEFENDANTS AND DEFENSE ATTORNEYS IN THE BAADER-MEINHOF TRIAL AT STUTTGART-STAMMHEIM, HAD CREATED A MOOD OF DOMESTIC POLITICAL CRISIS IN BONN.

3. THE GOVERNMENT HAD HOPED TO PUT THE WHOLE ISSUE OF WIRETAPPING TO REST AFTER THE BUNDESTAG DEBATE ON MARCH 16 (BONN 4816). HOWEVER, FOLLOWING ON THE HEELS CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BONN 04959 01 OF 02 211957Z

OF THE TRAUBE AFFAIR THE LATEST DISCLOSURES TOOK ON A NEW DIMENSION. NOW IT WAS NOT ONLY FDP INTERIOR MINISTER MAIHOFFER WHO WAS UNDER FIRE FOR ALLEGEDLY VIOLATING CIVIL LIBERTIES, BUT ALSO THE STATE SECRETARY IN THE FEDERAL CHANCELLERY (SCHUELER) WAS INVOLVED. IN 1975-1976, SCHUELER HAD AUTHORIZED THE FEDERAL INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION TO PROVIDE "TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE" TO THE BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG AUTHORITIES TO MONITOR CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN TWO OF THE BAADER-MEINHOF DEFENDANTS AND THEIR LAWYERS. IN BOTH THE FDP AND SPD FRAKTIONS THERE WERE CALLS FOR THE RESIGNATION OF MAIHOFFER AND SCHUELER.

4. THE REMARK BY SPD FRAKTION CHAIRMAN WEHNER TO A TV JOURNALIST THAT THE "RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS " SHOULD RESIGN HAS NOT HELPED MATTERS. THE CABINET MET ON MONDAY, MARCH 21, TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION. CLEARLY, SCHMIDT AND GENSCHER ARE ENGAGED IN A DAMAGE-LIMITING OPERATION FOR THEY ARE AWARE THAT SUCH RESIGNATIONS

COULD BE FATALY DESTABILIZING FOR THE GOVERNMENT
COALITION.

5. THE ELECTION OF KLAUS UWE BENNETER, AN AVOWED
STAMOKAP (I.E., A RADICAL GROUP IN THE JUSO ORGANIZA-
TION WHO MAINTAIN THAT THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC IS
CONTROLLED BY "STATE MONOPOLY CAPITALISM"), ADDED TO THE
CHANCELLOR'S DISTRESS. BENNETER WAS ELECTED OVER THE
OPPOSITION OF THE SO-CALLED REFORM GROUP IN THE JUSOS

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PAGE 01 BONN 04959 02 OF 02 211749Z
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-----211757Z 026748 /43

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 04959

BY A SLIGHT MAJORITY. EVEN THE REFORM GROUP, LED BY JUSO CHAIRMAN HEIDI WIECZOREK-ZEUL, HAD BEEN A THORN IN THE SIDE OF THE GOVERNMENT, BUT SCHMIDT CAN EXPECT EVEN MORE TROUBLE WITH BENNETER AT THE HELM. A VOCAL AND CRITICAL JUSO LEADER WILL NOT ONLY PROVIDE AN IMAGE PROBLEM FOR THE SPD AMONG THE VOTERS BUT IF THE JUSOS
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PAGE 02 BONN 04959 02 OF 02 211749Z

COOPERATE WITH THE COMMUNISTS AS THE STAMOKAPS WOULD LIKE, THE ISSUE COULD BRING ABOUT A CRISIS IN THE PARTY. WHATEVER HAPPENS, BENNETER'S ELECTION IS SURE TO ADD TO SCHMIDT'S DIFFICULTIES AND IS LIKELY TO HARM RELATIONS WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT COALITION.

6. VIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS OVER THE WEEKEND AT A NUCLEAR PLANT SITE IN LOWER SAXONY ALSO REFLECT POORLY ON THE SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT. THE GOVERNMENT WILL ONCE AGAIN COME UNDER CRITICISM FOR NOT BEING TOUGH ENOUGH WITH DEMONSTRATORS. IN ADDITION, THE LATEST INCIDENT ALSO DEMONSTRATES THE FACT THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT COME TO GRIPS WITH THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS SURROUNDING THE FUTURE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY IN THE FRG. THE CHANCELLOR CAN ONLY HOPE THAT THE VIOLENCE ENGINEERED BY COMMUNIST AND OTHER RADICAL GROUPS WILL CREATE A BACKLASH IN PUBLIC OPINION WHICH WILL INCREASE SUPPORT FOR A REASONABLE GOVERNMENT NUCLEAR ENERGY POLICY.

7. TO TOP IT ALL OFF, THE CDU MADE STUNNING GAINS IN THE COMMUNAL ELECTIONS IN HESSE. ALTHOUGH THE SPD EXPECTED A SETBACK, THE MAGNITUDE OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS' VICTORY CAME AS A SHOCK. IN THE TRADITIONAL SPD STRONGHOLD OF FRANKFURT, FOR EXAMPLE, THE CDU WON AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE WORLD WAR II. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT DEBACLE IN HESSE WILL ONLY ADD TO THE SENSE OF MALAISE WITHIN THE PARTY, ENCOURAGE THE OPPOSITION, AND INCREASE DIFFICULTIES FOR SCHMIDT AND BRANDT. (FRANKFURT IS REPORTING THE HESSE ELECTION RESULTS IN A SEPARATE TELEGRAM).

8. THE LATEST CHAIN OF EVENTS SERVES FURTHER TO ILLUMINATE THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE SECOND SCHMIDT/GENSCHER GOVERNMENT. AS REPORTED EARLIER, THE GOVERNMENT STUMBLERED FROM THE VERY BEGINNING AND HAS YET TO
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PAGE 03 BONN 04959 02 OF 02 211749Z

REGAIN A SOLID FOOTING. SO FAR THE COALITION HAS BEEN
SAVED MORE BY THE LACK OF SKILL AND AGGRESSIVENESS ON
THE PART OF THE OPPOSITION THAN BY ITS OWN WISDOM OR
ABILITY. HOWEVER, THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS WILL MAKE IT
NECESSARY FOR SCHMIDT AND GENSCHER TO ENGAGE ALL THEIR
POLITICAL TALENTS TO SHORE UP THE COALITION IF THE
GOVERNMENT IS TO SURVIVE ITS TERM.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COALITION GOVERNMENT, POLITICAL STABILITY, MONITORING, SURVEILLANCE, POLITICAL SITUATION, SOCIAL DEMOCRATS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 21-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BONN04959
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770178-1115, D770096-0667
Format: TEL
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770341/aaaabiuz.tel
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Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 38855cb5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STUTTGART 466, 77 BONN 4816, 77 BONN 3793
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3053190
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STORMY SEAS AHEAD FOR THE BONN GOVERNMENT
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, GE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/38855cb5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009